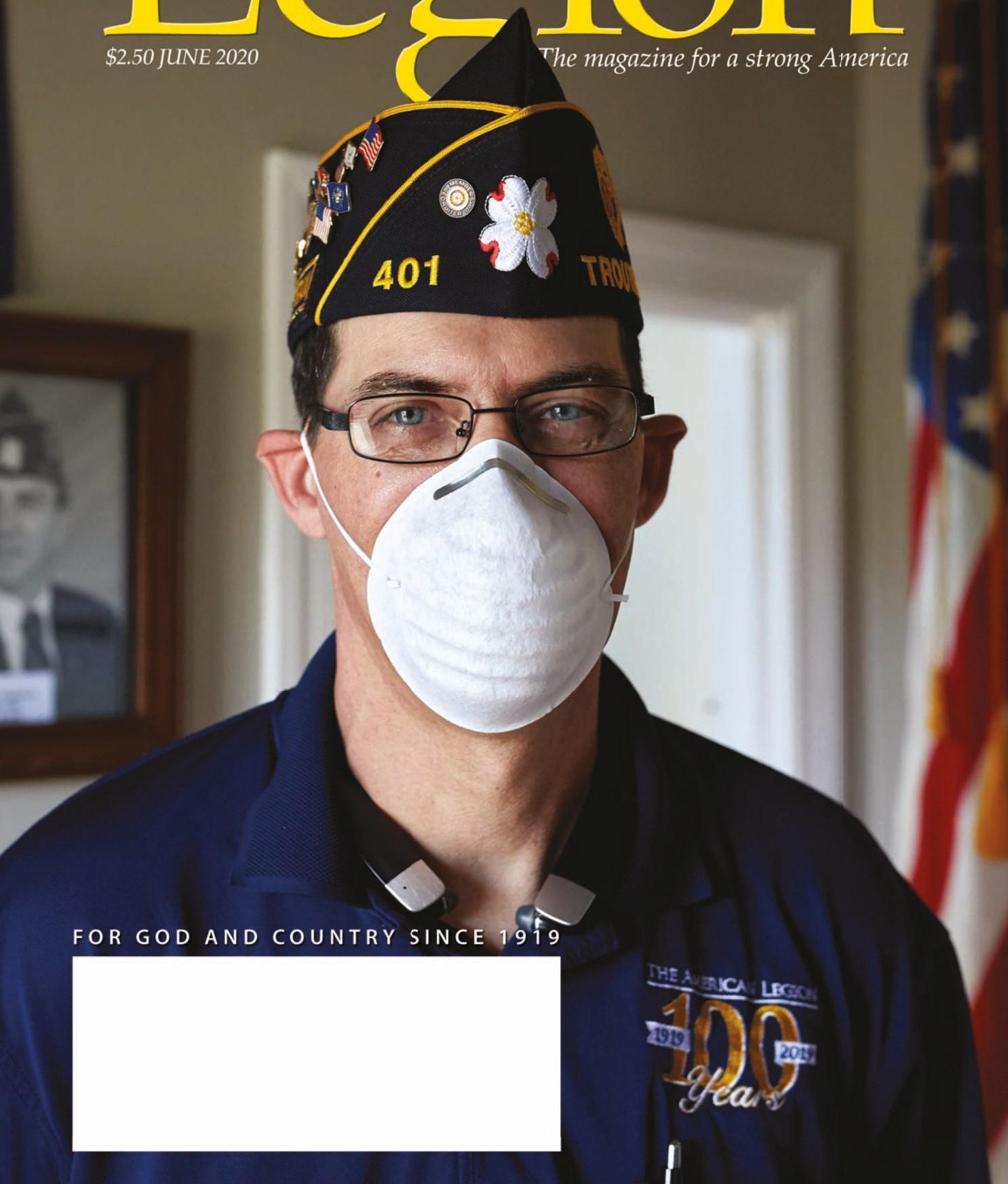


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Members of Granby American Legion Post 266 deliver care packages to Soldiers' Home residents and Air National Guard personnel who were moved to Holyoke Medical Center in Holyoke, Mass., due to COVID-19. Photo by Glenn Osmundson

ON THE COVER

Lee McDaniel, sergeant at arms for American Legion Post 401 in Troutman, N.C., coordinated a Red Cross blood drive at the post's home in April as the coronavirus crisis erupted nationwide. Photo by Logan Cyrus



The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 12,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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'The People's Telescope'

Congratulations to Matt Grills for telling the story of veterans who are helping keep the Hubble Space Telescope operational (April). In the summer of my junior year in high school, I worked on a dredge that pumped the land the assembly building and launch pads now stand on.

— Harvey Henderson, Milton, Fla.

I cannot thank Matt Grills enough for his excellent article. Veterans are and were, indeed, a key part of the team that has kept the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) operational a decade past its expected lifespan. I was there for the launch in 1990 and the battery-servicing-mission launch in 2009. I spent the better part of my working career as a battery engineer supporting this "game-changer for astronomy," and want to give credit to the engineers at NASA, Lockheed Martin and the many subcontractors, including EaglePicher, who contributed to the design, test and qualification of the first set of Nickel-Hydrogen (Ni-H2) batteries that had exceeded the specified 60-month operational life requirements by 168 months when replaced in 2009. The second set of Ni-H2 batteries are performing better than the first set and are projected to last longer than HST's expected life.

— Jon D. Armantrout, Reno, Nev.

The article on the Hubble Space Telescope was of great interest to me as an amateur astronomer since I was a kid, and as a telemetry tracker of Sputnik I in 1957. I was part of the Sputnik telemetry tracking team at the Ordnance Missile Labs of the Army's Redstone Arsenal. Sputnik was rather technically unsophisticated, with only two radio telemetry signals — one for satellite internal pressure and one for internal temperature — but it worked and it was the first.

As the article says, Hubble has 7,000 telemetry channels, and is one of, if not the most, technically sophisticated satellites up there today. The stories of the six veterans were informative. It's interesting how their former military careers fit right into the civilian Hubble program. The text and photos (including the magazine cover) are the best I've seen on Hubble for general audience readers.

— John S. "Jack" Gibson, Hideaway, Texas

This article on the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope did a great job of explaining the accomplishments of this engineering marvel, even to the point of covering the spherical aberration of the primary mirror. Through the years many great scientific firsts have been recorded, and the folks at Goddard Space Flight Center have done a super job. But I was disappointed that there was not one word about who designed, built and launched this gem: the folks at Lockheed Missiles & Space Company (LMSC) in Sunnyvale, Calif. When I retired from the Navy in September 1975 as a commander, I went to work at LMSC and got to know some of the team that made Hubble possible. They deserve at least a mention.

— Dave Ayres, Plano, Texas

'The Wisdom Gap'

I thought Alan W. Dowd's article (April) was one of the best articles I've seen in *The American Legion Magazine*. It was very insightful as to how we need to listen to many experienced and expert advisers to make wise decisions.

— Gary Hurelle, Lakewood, Colo.

Alan W. Dowd's message is a wake-up call this nation needs to hear. Hopefully it will spread beyond readers of this magazine.

— Douglas Creswell, Mount Airy, Md.

I enjoyed Alan Dowd's article about wisdom. In a way, this concept applies to an annual American Legion exercise. At

graduation ceremonies in three local middle schools for over a decade, I have presented American Legion School Award medallions and certificates to two eighth-grade graduates. I wondered how a 14-year-old could possess such advanced and exemplary qualities without having had the requisite 10,000 hours of training to acquire such mastery. I realized then that the more important objective of the program was targeted toward all students so that they would have a model, the award recipient, to emulate on their journey to becoming wise citizens.

— Lawrence Jones, Dormont, Pa.

'Fast Track'

As a UA (United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry) and Fresno Federal American Legion Post 509 member, I want to thank you for Ken Olsen's article about getting veterans into the mainstream and good-paying jobs (April). UA has been doing this for almost a decade. We are a small local in Fresno but have two apprentices from the VIP program now enrolled in our training program along with other veterans. We are working on establishing a veterans program in our local to help our community.

We also opened our training center to Boy Scouts to help them earn their Plumbing merit badge, with several members — some veterans and former Boy Scouts, one an Eagle Scout — as instructors. UA and American Legion strong!

— Tony Flores, Fresno, Calif.

The Right to Organize bill

In response to the columns regarding the PRO Act (Big Issues, April), I offer these common-sense perspectives.

There are seldom speeches from the political podium or the preacher's pulpit that include words of support for workers. The only voice doing that is the voice of the unions. Unions lead the way in job-site safety, training and education, and professionalism within the represented industry. Collective bargaining (negotiation) usually results in a better standard of living via more valuable wage-and-benefits packages for the workers. This in turn provides more revenue for municipal, county, state and federal coffers.

Unions remind us that the origin of overtime rates was not as a reward for workers, but a disincentive to keeping them away from their families for more than the standard eight-hour day.

When a union is supported, it not only tries to effect positive change within its own ranks but does everything in its power to ensure the profitability and/or success of the company — or any other entity — with which union members are employed. Unions really are good for America's workers and America's businesses.

— Ed Knox, Abilene, Texas

Editor's note: In "Lore of the Legion" (April), Hulon B. Whittington was described as dying of a heart attack in 1963. He did suffer a heart attack in that year, but died in 1969.

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We will get through this, as we always have

Our country has faced many challenges in the century since The American Legion was founded. The Great Depression, World War II and 9/11 come quickly to mind as times that forever changed America. But the COVID-19 pandemic has been as unique as it is daunting.

This isn't an enemy you can simply destroy with military superiority. It isn't a disaster area that can be rebuilt with truckloads of supplies from our posts or grants provided by our National Emergency Fund. It is a public health threat the likes of which we have not seen since the influenza outbreak of 1918.

Social distancing, stay-at-home requirements and quarantines have led us to cancel major national gatherings and programs of The American Legion. Those decisions were difficult and easy – difficult because we know the value of these outstanding youth programs and the work that goes into planning events, and easy because we place an even greater value on the health and safety of our participants and their families.

It's impossible to know what direction the coronavirus curve will take by the time this issue of *The American Legion Magazine* reaches your mailbox. The worst of the crisis may be over or still lie ahead.

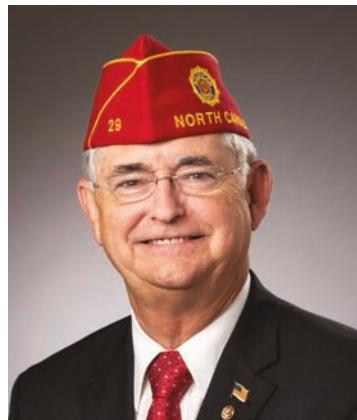
However, I am confident that The American Legion will continue to be a leader in communities across the nation and around the world. In Bethlehem, Conn., Post 146 collected critical supplies such as masks, gloves and disinfectant wipes for health-care workers. In Austintown, Ohio, Post 301 provided food for 200 families. In Two Harbors, Minn., Post 109 conducted "Enhanced Buddy Checks," including daily morale calls, shopping trips and prescription pick-ups to protect veterans who are high risk should they contract COVID-19. Whether it's offering drive-through meals to local residents or hosting Red Cross blood drives, American Legion posts are mobilizing for America.

The coronavirus has badly damaged the U.S. economy. Unemployment has skyrocketed and businesses are struggling to survive. Nevertheless, I draw inspiration from our organization's history, how The American Legion responded during some of America's most difficult times. In the earliest days of the Great Depression, Post 81 in New Jersey served more than 14,000 free meals in just over a year. Posts in Memphis, Tenn., provided food, clothing and fuel to more than 12,000 people in need. Hundreds of other posts did the same.

By the time the crisis ends, this generation of Legionnaires will prove to be worthy successors to this legacy of serving America and its people.

In his 1933 inaugural address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt described the trials ahead. "Our greatest primary task is to put people to work," he said. "This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources."

Today, The American Legion's response to a beleaguered and hurting America is the same as it has always been: "At your service!"



National Commander
James W. "Bill" Oxford

MEMORANDA

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS

Posts must submit their 2019-2020 Consolidated Post Reports to National Headquarters by July 1 to be included in the national totals for the reporting year. CPRs can be downloaded and mailed in or scanned and emailed; they can also be completed online at mylegion.org.

legion.org/publications

FLAG DAY

The American Legion offers resources to help the Legion Family promote Flag Day on June 14. A suggested speech and the "Let the People Decide" booklet are available to download.

legion.org/publications

For copies of the U.S. Flag Code, "Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette" and other flag literature, go to emblem.legion.org.

For an FAQ and more about the U.S. flag, go to legion.org/flag.

Pause for the Pledge (wherever you are) will take place at 7 p.m. EDT June 14.

The American Legion sends out Flag Alert email and text notifications when the U.S. flag is to be displayed at half-staff. Learn more at legion.org/newsletters.

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**"I was about to give up...
I wouldn't have known where to go.**

*Korean War Army veteran Willie Alvin Cousin,
who received long-overdue and wrongly denied
VA disability benefits after his case was reopened
and won by American Legion Department
Service Officer K. Robert Lewis*

FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES IN NEED

**"These were important things.
It helped them not get behind
in their rent... It helped them
put food in the refrigerator.**

*Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charlie Ray
after American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance
helped more than 3,120 children whose active-duty families
were affected by the federal government shutdown*



Your gift provides hope for disabled veterans and children in need.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly the American Legion Endowment Fund, delivers vital financial support for service officers worldwide who are working on VA disability claims for more than 700,000 U.S. military veterans at any one time, all the time. The fund also supplies American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance cash grants for military and veteran families with minor children at home, who have encountered hardships beyond their control and need short-term help covering the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing or other necessities.



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"Transitioning is a really scary thing, no matter what stage in life you're at. Taking what you do in the military and applying it to the civilian (world) can be very, very overwhelming. Organizations like Hiring Our Heroes and The American Legion taking the time to reach out to veterans, to reach out to transitioning servicemembers to make sure they're ready for the workforce, is crucial."

Army veteran Stephanie Ramirez, 26, at an American Legion Hiring Our Heroes Career Fair in Washington, D.C., in March

The Veterans Employment & Education Division at American Legion National Headquarters is dedicated to effective transitions from military service to civilian success. Contained within the division's portfolio of responsibilities are:

- Education and career training
- Licensing and credentialing
- Employment
- Business development
- VA home loans
- Help for homeless veterans

The Washington-based division testifies before Congress on such issues as Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and compliance with the Veterans Preference Hiring Act, and on behalf of disabled veteran business owners seeking fair treatment when bidding for federal contracts.

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Career events The American Legion's national Veterans Employment & Education Division organizes and supports more than 100 career events for veterans and their spouses every year. A listing of those events is posted on the national website. legion.org/careers/jobfairs

Skills translator The American Legion and Military.com offer a co-branded Veteran Employment Center, powered by Monster.com, to help veterans convert their skills and training to successful careers. legion.monster.com

Business workshops Throughout the year, The American Legion presents or participates in multiple learning events for veteran entrepreneurs. Among the features available is a 10-episode video tutorial to help veterans leverage their military skills and training to start and successfully operate businesses. legion.org/careers/entrepreneur

VA home loans A brochure filled with helpful information for veterans seeking VA home loans is produced by the Veterans Employment & Education Division.

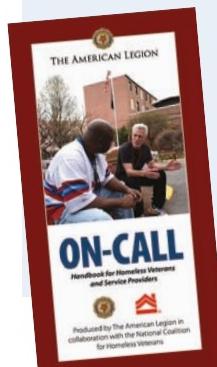
legion.org/publications



Veterans preference Federal programs that award veterans of specific service periods additional points in their applications for government employment, as well as advantages for applicants who are disabled veterans, are outlined in The American Legion's Veterans Preference brochure. legion.org/publications

GI Bill Multiple online tools are available to help veterans understand their GI Bill benefits and help them select veteran-friendly colleges. Visit the American Legion Education Center online.

legion.org/education



Help for the homeless The American Legion and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans have teamed up to produce "On-Call," a handbook for homeless veterans and service providers. The 22-page booklet can be downloaded online.

legion.org/publications

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JIMMY ALLEN

Nestled among snow-capped mountains with a desert to the west, the scenic Eagle Mountain is one of Utah's fastest-growing communities, from 250 in 1996 to nearly 40,000 residents today.

The city is full of young families – perfect for Army veteran Jimmy Allen's vision for an American Legion post that mentors children in patriotism and Americanism.

Post 111 focused on youth activities even before its official charter last December. That same month, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – Utah's largest sponsor of Boy Scout troops – ended a century-old relationship. "That left a big hole for many kids in the community who wanted to continue in Scouting," says Allen, a father of four.

Post members voted to charter two Scouting units, one for boys and one for girls. So far, about 90 children have joined.

Allen, who deployed in Desert Storm and the Iraq War, says veterans have much to offer young people through the Scouting program, including flag etiquette, citizenship and service.

"It's important for American Legion members to serve as mentors because of their (military) experience. It has the ability to transfer to Scouting, and we can show these kids what a leader really is."

– Henry Howard

BRANCH OF SERVICE Army/Army National Guard (1989-2010)

RANK Staff sergeant

MILITARY JOB Stinger missile crewmember/cavalry scout

AMERICAN LEGION POST American Legion Post 111, Eagle Mountain, Utah

YEARS IN THE AMERICAN LEGION 2

AMERICAN LEGION ACTIVITIES
Post commander (2018-present)

"The American Legion fits for many people who are missing something after they left the service, the camaraderie."



**Watch an interview with
Jimmy Allen online:**

legion.org/magazine

See an archive of past interviews:

legion.org/iamlegion

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Equal Rights Amendment



SUPPORT

Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif.

■ Levin is a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.



OPPOSE

Rep. Debbie Lesko, R-Ariz.

■ Lesko is a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

To this day, women in the United States lack basic legal protections against discrimination. One hundred years after winning the right to vote, they still face injustices throughout our society, such as devastating wage gaps, pregnancy discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Even women who have served our country in military uniform can be denied the same professional opportunities as their male counterparts. The U.S. Constitution does not explicitly ban discrimination based on gender, and it's long past time to change that.

Nearly 50 years ago, the House of Representatives passed the Equal Rights Amendment, which clearly states that equal rights under the law shall not be denied on account of gender. In the years following that monumental step, 35 states ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. Three more states have followed suit in recent years, including Virginia this past year. Finally, the amendment has the total number of states needed for ratification.

However, an arbitrary deadline for ratification has left the Equal Rights Amendment in question. Thanks to a historic bipartisan vote by the House of Representatives earlier this year, that deadline was removed, bringing us one step closer toward ensuring that women's equality is enshrined in our Constitution.

Nearly five decades after the House passed the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, it is more overdue than ever before. We must now finish this fight and demand the Senate hold a vote to allow the Equal Rights Amendment to proceed. It's time we finally unleash the full potential of all Americans.

House Democrats recently pushed through an unconstitutional resolution to retroactively revive the failed Equal Rights Amendment, which was submitted for ratification in 1972 and failed to garner the support of the needed 38 states. I am a woman, so I obviously care about and support equal rights for women, but I opposed this legislation for three reasons.

First, the Equal Rights Amendment is clearly unconstitutional. The original deadline for ratification was in 1979. Congress does not have the authority to extend the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment after 41 years simply because of shifting political trends in one state.

Second, the Equal Rights Amendment is unnecessary. Women's equality under the law is already recognized in the Fifth and 14th amendments of the Constitution. Plus, numerous other state and federal laws already prohibit discrimination based on sex.

What is most troubling about the Equal Rights Amendment is that pro-abortion advocates have openly argued that it would allow unlimited and unrestricted abortions nationwide. Judges would be required to strike down pro-life laws, and taxpayer dollars would be used to fund abortions across the country.

The deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment has come and gone. If it actually had the support of voters, Democrats would reintroduce their proposal and allow the American people to decide for themselves. Even Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the deadline has passed, and it is time for a new beginning. Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Democrats should take note.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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The Honorable (name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121



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1. Methodology: Phone surveys at regular intervals with COPD patients using the InCourage system, as part of a subset of the overall RespirTech bronchiectasis outcomes registry. Data collection began in 2013. As of 11/31/18, 154 patients completed the baseline survey; 108 patients in 1-month cohort; 89 in 3-month cohort; 70 in 6-month cohort; 43 in 12-month cohort.



Media Bakery

PATIENT POWER

Managing diabetes depends largely on the individual.

Diabetes is a major health concern for the United States, affecting more than 30 million Americans. It is particularly prevalent among veterans. The good news, however, is that there are many ways to manage and halt the progression of diabetes, and they all center on the patient.

"Diabetes requires a team effort," says Adam Mayerson, an endocrinologist in Connecticut. "It doesn't matter how many medications are prescribed or how much fancy technology is offered; if patients do not commit to their treatment plan, we cannot achieve optimal health."

Patients are encouraged to take the lead by monitoring their blood-sugar levels, taking their medications as prescribed and making healthy lifestyle choices.

People with diabetes can't feel when their blood sugar (glucose) is high. In addition, people's bodies work differently, so testing blood sugar is the only way to know for certain if levels are healthy from day to day. For some people, a high-tech option like continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) is the best choice. For others, a simple glucometer and testing strips are all that is needed.

Regardless of the tools used, patients must commit to tracking blood-sugar changes so they understand how their bodies are working. For example, if blood sugar rises to over 180 mg/dL after eating a meal, that's a sign that the portion size or carbohydrate content may need to be reduced, or that more medication may be required. Individuals should keep track of readings through a glucometer in a planner or on a smartphone so they can discuss them with their health-care team.

Medication may be necessary to lower glucose levels consistently. In these cases, it is crucial that patients take medication exactly as prescribed.

BY MICHELLE
GIBEAULT TRAUB

A 2018 study of veterans found that patients with diabetes who did not take medications consistently were 14 percent more likely to have a heart attack and 22 percent more likely to have a stroke. For the greatest success, in addition to following a blood-sugar testing schedule, individuals with diabetes should have a medication schedule. Reminders can be set via an alarm clock, app, smartphone alert or written daily checklist. Pill organizers can also help people with diabetes stick to their prescribed plan.

Consistency is the key to managing diabetes. This is especially true for lifestyle choices like eating regular meals every four to six hours, exercising daily, avoiding smoking and managing stress. Make changes slowly, and focus on small goals to avoid getting overwhelmed.

When it comes to eating, there is no one "diabetes diet." It is helpful to work with a registered dietitian nutritionist who can recommend a personalized nutrition plan. In general, it is best to limit or avoid sugary foods and drinks like cookies, cake, candy, soda and juice, which can cause blood sugar to rise quickly or spike. High-fiber, high-protein foods will help keep glucose levels steady. Unprocessed foods like vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat dairy products and whole fruits are great choices.

Exercise is an especially potent tool in managing diabetes. It effectively lowers blood sugar levels while assisting weight management and decreasing stress. All forms of movement work, including walking, biking, swimming or a fitness class.

Americans with diabetes have more resources than ever available to them, putting the power in their hands.

Michelle Gibeault is a dietitian and health writer based in Connecticut.

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Groceries and more, to your door

During the coronavirus crisis, many Americans began rethinking how they get goods and even services to their home, taking advantage of home delivery. From food to pharmacies to odd jobs, you have more options than ever.

Not all companies listed here are national. Enter your ZIP code on the website to check availability in your area. You can also Google "delivery service" and your city and state, to see local options. Retailers like Walmart may have their own delivery services; check the website or call your local store.

Deliveries can be scheduled in advance, for the same day or even the next hour.

- Third party-services that deliver from restaurants include DoorDash ([doordash.com](#)), Grubhub ([grubhub.com](#)) and Uber Eats ([ubereats.com](#)).
- **Delivery.com**. Goes to groceries, restaurants and other stores, plus laundering/dry cleaning/tailoring services.
- FreshDirect ([freshdirect.com](#)). Groceries, direct from the suppliers/growers.
- Google Shopping ([shopping.google.com](#)). Direct delivery of non-perishable groceries and other goods.
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- Shipt ([shipt.com](#)). Goes to groceries and other stores.
- PillPack ([pillpack.com](#)). A pharmacy service that packages medication(s) together by time of day. Shipping is free; you are only responsible for your copays.
- TaskRabbit ([taskrabbit.com](#)). Freelance laborers available for immediate household tasks, from furniture construction to cleaning to planting flowers and more.

Also, if you are looking for employment, check these websites. Several of the companies are hiring.

— Laura Edwards

The right foods for feeling right

You are what you eat, as the saying goes – and there's a lot of truth to it. "The right types of food can raise your energy and make you feel better," according to WebMD.

Sugar levels play a big part, which is why experts encourage people to consume low-glycemic foods such as beans, non-starchy vegetables, nuts and whole grains. These foods help to keep blood sugar in balance.

High-glycemic foods, on the other hand, deliver brief energy spikes but actually make a person feel drained soon after the blood-sugar spike. They include white rice, white bread and sugar-sweetened drinks.



Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

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Dark Clouds Silver Linings

In just a few weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic changed America – and Americans rose to the occasion.

BY ALAN W. DOWD



USNS Comfort passes the Statue of Liberty as it arrives in New York City on March 30. The naval hospital ship has 1,000 beds and 12 operating rooms. Comfort's mission was to handle overflow or acute trauma cases and other urgent needs, but as of April 20 its medical workers had treated 173 patients, about 120 of whom had COVID-19, according to the Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk, Va. Getty

Those who view government as the sole source of all good things have seen during the COVID-19 crisis the creativity, inventiveness and nimbleness of houses of worship, charities and businesses. While the gears of government churned into motion, the charitable and business sectors rapidly redirected their energies toward providing emergency relief, caring for those in need, producing medical equipment, delivering supplies and developing medicines and vaccines.

Churches, synagogues and mosques shifted to livestream liturgies to feed the soul. Some churches offered drive-through confessions, others drive-through communion, still others drive-up services and sermons.

The faith community also met the physical needs of a frightened nation. *Christianity Today* details how a church in New Hope, Minn., refashioned its food pantry into a drive-through; a Jefferson, Ga., church delivered food to health-care workers; and a Birmingham, Ala., church supplied groceries to seniors.

Golden Harvest food banks in Georgia and South Carolina offered daily meals to-go, created a no-contact mobile market and delivered food to seniors.

As *Global Impact* reports, Amicares provided supplies to clinics that serve the uninsured. Direct Relief partnered with FedEx to deliver surgical masks, gloves and face shields. Matthew 25 Ministries distributed medical supplies to nursing homes. World Vision sent masks, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to family-serving charities. Mercy Corps helped small businesses develop continuity plans and provided emergency payments. The Salvation Army distributed food, baby supplies, sanitizers and paper products.

Foundations and other charities joined forces to sustain cities and states. Seattle-based

foundations launched the COVID-19 Response Fund to distribute grants to low-income residents, health-care workers, service-industry employees and the homeless. Foundations and charities stood up the Central Indiana COVID-19 Community Economic Relief Fund to provide grants to human-services organizations in Indianapolis and neighboring counties. Several foundations formed the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund to provide grants and interest-free loans to nonprofits. The California Wellness Foundation sent assistance to health-care workers, seniors and clinics. The list goes on and on, repeated in state after state.

American Legion posts prepared meals, delivered groceries and prescriptions, and opened food pantries. Members called on veterans and their families to see if they had needs, or just wanted someone to talk to. The 2019-introduced Buddy Check program assisted thousands across the country.

In the business sector, biopharmaceutical firms such as Eli Lilly launched drive-through coronavirus testing for first responders, health-care workers, essential workers, seniors and at-risk groups. Roche churned out 400,000 test kits per week.

After the Air Force airlifted 800,000 test kits to Memphis, FedEx took the baton and distributed them across the nation.

Anheuser-Busch produced and distributed hand sanitizer across the country. Liquor-maker Pernod Ricard USA – best known for Absolut vodka – converted production lines in Arkansas, West Virginia, Kentucky and Texas to make hand sanitizer. Bacardi and Patrón donated millions to support restaurants shuttered by the COVID-19 response.

LEGO and AT&T donated millions to help families grappling with school closures. Micron donated millions for economic recovery and medical supplies.



American Legion Post 401 in Troutman, N.C.,
collected 34 units of blood from 38 donors. Photo by Logan Cyrus

Honeywell produced millions of extra N95 masks. Likewise, 3M doubled production of N95 respirators – producing almost 100 million per month – and increased production of hand sanitizers and disinfectants. MyPillow shifted operations to producing masks for health-care workers. Apple donated 20 million masks and began producing face shields. GM, Ford, Tesla, GE and rocket-builder Virgin Orbit started mass-producing ventilators.

The NFL donated \$35 million to COVID-19 relief. The NBA and WNBA tossed in \$50 million. Each

MLB franchise donated \$1 million to ballpark employees to help them through the months without games. MLB apparel partner Fanatics produced masks and hospital gowns.

New York hotels converted rooms into hospital space, increasing capacity by 39,000 beds.

Scientists across the United States, including the Army's Medical Research and Development Command, raced to develop a vaccine and identify therapeutic options. Johnson & Johnson plans to begin human testing for a COVID-19 vaccine by September. Moderna could have a COVID-19 drug for health workers in the fall.

Through it all, heroes emerged: grocers and nurses, paramedics and long-haul truckers, UPS drivers and doctors, food-pantry volunteers and FedEx pilots, Amazon delivery workers and virologists.

“The intelligence and power of the people are disseminated through all the parts of this vast country,” the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville marveled of the United States in his oft-quoted 1835 classic book, “Democracy in America.” “Instead of radiating from a common point, they cross each other in every direction.”

Almost 200 years later, that still holds true.

Fifty states, one nation Of course, the COVID-19 crisis reminds us that some challenges are

Major outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics in U.S. history

An influenza pandemic, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is “a global outbreak of a new influenza-A virus that is very different from current and recently circulating human seasonal influenza-A viruses.” These viruses are constantly changing, “making it possible on very rare occasions for non-human influenza viruses to change in such a way that they can infect people easily and spread efficiently from person to person.”

COVID-19 – short for “coronavirus disease 2019” – is similar to influenza in that both cause infectious respiratory illness; both are transmitted by contact and/or airborne droplets; both can cause fever, coughing, aching and fatigue; both can lead to pneumonia; and both can be fatal, especially for individuals with compromised conditions. As this issue of *The American Legion Magazine* went to press, its full impact had yet to be seen.

Yellow fever outbreak (1793)

5,000 deaths in Philadelphia
(out of a population of around 28,500)

Typhoid fever outbreak (1906-1907)

10,771 deaths, mostly in New York



Soldiers from Fort Riley, Kan., are treated for Spanish flu at a hospital ward at Camp Funston. National Museum of Health and Medicine

Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-1920)

500 million people infected worldwide
50 million deaths worldwide,
675,000 American deaths (out of a population of 103 million)

Diphtheria outbreak (1921-1925)

206,000 Americans stricken
15,520 American deaths

too enormous for businesses and charities to address on their own. Those who view government as the source of all our problems have seen the importance of government institutions in preserving public order and public health, providing for the general welfare and coordinating great undertakings.

Related, the crisis reminds us that our federal system makes it difficult to force everyone in every state and every county to get on the same page. Yet this very system encourages the sort of flexibility, creativity and adaptivity – characteristics Tocqueville observed in the 1830s – needed to attack this challenge in a targeted way.

What makes sense – what's necessary – for North Dakota in battling COVID-19 may not work for New York. And so governors acted accordingly, basing their responses on what their states needed. Some saw this as haphazard. More accurately, it was adaptive and tailored. That's the genius of federalism: the government closest to the people is usually best at serving the people.

Moreover, government agencies suspended regulations and allowed medical professionals to move across state lines to help where most needed. Several states issued waivers to allow medical professionals to conduct health services via computer and telephone. Governors collaborated regionally to reopen their states.

Still, there are some things only the federal

government can do. Governors can triage problems and manage local disaster response. Charities can provide stopgap assistance. Businesses can temporarily shift operations to respond to emergencies. But businesses (no matter how big the profits), charities (no matter how large the endowment) and governors (no matter how populous the state) cannot print money, waive federal regulations, distribute stimulus checks, postpone Tax Day, stay foreclosures, backstop industries, halt

The American Legion Family of Post 162 in Lowville, N.Y. staged a series of pop-up barbecues to show appreciation for truckers, postal employees and other essential workers in their community. Photo by Zach Krahmer



Polio epidemic (1916-1955)

57,628 Americans stricken
3,145 American deaths



A physical therapist works with young polio patients. CDC's Public Health Image Library

Asian Flu pandemic (1957-1958)

1.1 million deaths worldwide
116,000 American deaths (out of a population of 171 million)

H3N2 pandemic (1968)

1 million deaths worldwide
100,000 American deaths (out of a population of 200 million)

H1N1 swine flu pandemic (2009-2010)

1.4 billion people infected worldwide,
up to 575,400 deaths worldwide
Up to 89.3 million Americans stricken,
up to 402,719 Americans hospitalized
Up to 18,306 American deaths (out of a population of 306 million)

2018-2019 influenza-A season

Up to 44.9 million Americans stricken
Up to 766,472 Americans hospitalized
Up to 52,664 American deaths (out of a population of 326 million)

2019-2020 influenza-A season (October 2019-March 2020)

Up to 55 million Americans stricken
Up to 730,000 Americans hospitalized
Up to 63,000 American deaths



COVID-19 pandemic (December 2019-present)

3,057,957 million cases worldwide*
211,894 deaths worldwide*
988,469 Americans stricken*

56,253 American deaths* (out of a population of 328.2 million)

*through April 28, 2020

Sources: CDC, U.S. Census, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Healthline, Worldometer

“We seek to be proactive and not wait and listen as folks wonder how to provide for their children. I want my community to see us as a vital part of it, as a resource and an asset by what we do and how we serve.”

Debbie Evans, president of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 192 in Canton, Kan.

Daniel M. O’Connell American Legion Post 272 in Rockaway, N.Y., and the Department of New York provided food for the NYPD’s 100th Precinct.



American Legion Post 391 and VFW Post 6904 in Fortville, Ind., teamed up to provide nearly 300 Easter baskets and bags containing candy and toys for children. Photo by Steven B. Brooks



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 192 in Canton, Kan., provided sack lunches to children after local schools closed. Photo courtesy Auxiliary Unit 192 President Debbie Evans

international flights, or speak for and to the entire nation. That's where the federal government comes to the fore.

On Jan. 31, long before most Americans heard of COVID-19, President Trump restricted travel from China and ordered a quarantine of Americans arriving from China. By mid-March, he was framing the government's COVID-19 response as a "war." In many ways, the virus has put the United States on a war footing:

The president invoked the Korean War-era Defense Production Act "to ensure that our health-care system is able to surge capacity and capability to respond to the spread of COVID-19."

He deployed the Army Corps of Engineers to transform New York City's Javits Center into a 3,000-bed hospital staffed by 950 FEMA and Army personnel.

He ordered National Guard units to assist New York, California and Washington in standing up medical stations, expanding hospital-bed capacity by the thousands.

He dispatched Navy hospital ships *Comfort* and

In Sheboygan, Wis., the Camo Quilt Project – which includes American Legion Family members – switched from making quilts for deployed servicemembers and veterans in nursing homes to sewing hospital masks.

Mercy – one to the East Coast, one to the West Coast – each with approximately 1,000 hospital beds and 1,200 personnel.

As with Lincoln in 1863, Roosevelt on D-Day and Bush after 9/11, Trump declared a national day of prayer, "asking God for added wisdom, comfort and strength."

The Pentagon issued a call for veterans with medical specialties; 15,000 veterans volunteered to serve again.

Congress and the president unleashed \$2.2 trillion in emergency spending in response to COVID-19. The tsunami of spending, like the COVID-19 crisis itself, touches every sector and citizen: \$1,200 in direct cash payments to individuals; \$600 a week in federal unemployment benefits (in addition to state benefits); \$454 billion in stabilization loans for businesses, states and municipalities; \$150 billion to help states and cities address COVID-19; \$117 billion for hospitals; \$45 billion for FEMA; \$27.7 billion to bolster colleges and schools; \$25 billion in loans for passenger airlines; \$17 billion for national-security firms; and \$4 billion for cargo airlines.



American Legion Post 335 in Sylvester, Ga., placed 300 U.S. flags up and down the city's main street as a message of hope. Photo courtesy Ray Humphrey

Rothie American Legion Post 330 in Hayfield, Minn., organized a toilet-paper donation drive for elderly residents.

Business & Professional American Legion Post 10 in San Antonio put out a call on Twitter, challenging Legion Family members to "reach out to 5 others today. Let them know you're thinking about them. Ask them if they need anything. Be there for them."

To put the \$2.2 trillion COVID-19 relief package in perspective, the federal government spent \$4.45 trillion in 2019 – total. Whether the threat is a mighty army or a tiny pathogen, great nations spend whatever they need to survive. More spending is inevitable as Washington tries to contain economic damage caused by COVID-19 and reactions to it.

Consequence “Reaction” is an important word. All that spending comes in the wake of shelter-in-place orders from governors and social-distancing guidelines from federal officials. Policymakers issued these directives because public-health experts convinced them that shutting down most commercial and public activity was the only way to “flatten the curve.” That’s the term used to describe slowing the spread of COVID-19 by minimizing human-to-human contact, limiting the opportunity for transmission and preventing an overload of the health-care system. By early May, there were clear indications these efforts were working.

However, by flattening the curve, we flattened the economy.

“This is what The American Legion does. We contribute to the community. Everything we do is geared toward the community and the veterans.”

Joe Taney, a member of Abel-Poff-Leithiser American Legion Post 469 in Wrightsville, Pa., to Fox43



American Legion Post 266 in Granby, Mass., delivered care packages for residents of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home who were moved to Holyoke Medical Center during the outbreak. They also made care packages for airmen from Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield, Mass., who have been working at the Soldiers' Home and staying at local hotels during their assignment.

Photo by Glenn Osmundson

Experts say the COVID-19 crash could reduce U.S. GDP by 25 percent or more. Already, well over 23 million Americans have claimed unemployment due to the COVID-19 lockdown – the largest spike in unemployment claims in U.S. history – while stocks endured their worst single-day drop and worst first quarter ever as a result of the quarantine.

For individuals and markets, fear and uncertainty are deeply damaging. That explains why Trump has tried to find a balance between public health and economic health. “We cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself,” he said as quarantines crushed America’s consumer-driven economy. “Our country wasn’t built to be shut down.”

Trump isn’t alone. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has suggested the “quarantine everyone” and “close everything” approach may not have been the best strategy. After almost a month of mass lockdowns, Cuomo called for “a modified public-health strategy that ... complements a get-back-to-work strategy,” adding, “It’s not we’re either going to do public health or we’re going to do economic development ... We have to do both.”



Joseph L. Davis American Legion Post 47 in Havre de Grace, Md., reached out to members through social media, urging those needing assistance getting to medical appointments or getting groceries to call the post. Post 47 also set up a drive-thru food pantry for the community.

Photo by Matt Roth

Boone American Legion Post 4 in Florence, Ky., raised \$10,000 in less than three days to provide lodging and meals to veterans staying at the Fort Thomas, Ky., Division of the Cincinnati VA Medical Center who had to leave the facility to make room for COVID-19 patients.

"We hope we can keep doing this as long as we can get material and people to sew. This is turning into a real community project."

Rich Young, commander of Owen Barrett American Legion Post 110 in Mount Pleasant, Mich., which partnered with the community to produce masks for local health-care workers and veterans

As the worst of the public-health crisis recedes, Washington now faces the enormous economic crisis spawned by reaction to COVID-19 – mushrooming deficits, skyrocketing unemployment, devastated industries, flattened local economies, and all the collateral damage triggered by addressing these challenges.

If history is any guide, the U.S. military will sustain some of that collateral damage. After the Great Recession of 2008-2009, federal spending jumped 25 percent in the span of several months. In response, lawmakers passed the Budget Control Act, which included a sequestration provision aimed at shrinking the deficit. The resulting defense cuts undermined readiness and deterrent strength.

Given the deepening deficits caused by the COVID-19 crisis, it's likely that defense will again be in the crosshairs. While the Pentagon is an easy

target, consider this: we could eliminate the entire defense budget (\$738 billion in fiscal 2020) yet would still face a deficit (\$1.08 trillion pre-COVID-19) and wouldn't put a dent into the national debt (\$23 trillion pre-COVID-19).

If the defense budget becomes a casualty of the COVID-19 crisis, the consequences could be far-reaching. With Russia on the march and China on the rise, America's military needs every tool available to protect the national interest and preserve some semblance of international order.

Cause That brings us to where this crisis began: China.

We can't blame Beijing for COVID-19, but we can for its handling of it. What was a manageable public-health problem mushroomed into a global pandemic – erasing tens of thousands of lives and

"You don't have to be associated with The American Legion. You don't have to be a veteran. You don't need any documentation. You don't need ID. If you have a need, we'll feed you."

Mike Fowler, chef and activities director at American Legion Post 28 in Spartanburg, S.C.

American Legion Post 10 in Albany, Ore., teamed up with Southpaw's Pizza to provide meals for staff and residents at Edward C. Allworth Veterans' Home.

American Legion Post 146 in Bethlehem, Conn., collected masks, gloves and disinfectant wipes, helping nurses, EMTs and other health-care workers.

Charles Raymond Fagg American Legion Post and Riders Chapter 328 in Riley, Ind., offered a free drive-thru cookout to the community.

American Legion Post 18 in Weehawken, N.J., collected non-perishables for veterans in need and the elderly. The post also called its members regularly and brought them their medications and canned goods.

trillions of dollars – because Chinese authorities failed to act and then tried to cover up their failure.

Beijing jailed a physician for warning colleagues about COVID-19 (he later died), refused the CDC's offer to help, and ordered local scientists not to share or publish findings about coronavirus-genome sequencing. It took several weeks for Chinese officials to quarantine Wuhan, epicenter of the outbreak. During that time, thousands of people left Wuhan for destinations around the world.

The University of Southampton concludes that had Beijing taken appropriate action three weeks earlier, 95 percent of COVID-19 cases would have been prevented across China; one week earlier would have prevented 66 percent of cases.

That, in turn, would have prevented COVID-19 from becoming a global pandemic – but that would have required China behaving like a responsible power. Instead, Beijing lied about the outbreak's origin date, transmission rate and death toll.

The COVID-19 crisis proves that China's internal political system is an international problem. As the crisis eases, there are signs of a reckoning: global supply chains are diversifying away from China. There's a newfound – and healthy – distrust of Xi Jinping's regime. China's willful mishandling of COVID-19 has become a powerful counterpoint to Beijing's claim that business-suit authoritarianism is the wave of the future. And there are growing calls for Beijing to face diplomatic and financial penalties for its criminal malfeasance.

All of this takes place against a backdrop of the United States trying to cope with the costs of recovery – and China trying to exploit America's inward turn. As Henry Kissinger concludes, COVID-19's "political and economic upheaval ... could last for generations."

Learning and loss After 9/11, we were haunted by a host of new worries: Will this stadium, plane or skyscraper be the next target? How many more indignities, infringements on liberty, screenings and searches must we endure to guarantee our security? What if all those screenings and searches fail?

In the same way, after COVID-19, each flu season will bring new worries: Is it just a cold or something worse? Will some new virus trigger another

pandemic, another panic, another lockdown, another year without all the special moments of springtime – March Madness and opening day at the ballpark, commencement ceremonies and proms, first communion and the last day of school, Easter Sunday services and Memorial Day parades?

All those moments have one thing in common: large groups of people gathering together. The COVID-19 crisis stripped that away from us.

We can be thankful for the technologies that allow us to see, hear and communicate with one another. Zoom, Skype and FaceTime have enabled many (but not all) to keep working, allowed many students (but not all) to

keep learning, made it possible to conduct banking and some forms of commerce, provided a facsimile of worship services and offered us a sense of connection. Yet a sense of connection is not the same as real connection. These computer-screen connections – faux communities of our digital age – are no substitute for gathering together. What was true in the beginning is true today: "It is not good for man to be alone." We are made for real connection – for hugs, handshakes and high-fives.

While the crisis has given Americans an opportunity to reconnect with immediate family and share the precious gift of time, just as many of us were kept apart by the quarantines – and lost that precious gift of time with parents, grandparents, grandkids, friends and faith communities.

If ever people need real connection and real community – the social support of work, the comfort of grabbing coffee with friends, the joy of visiting Grandpa and Grandma, the reassurance of sharing dinner with extended family, the peace of visiting a house of worship – it's during a crisis. There's something transcendent about gathering with others who share our beliefs, hopes, worries and fears.

Too many of us perhaps took that for granted before COVID-19. ☺

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute.

Post activities report compiled by American Legion Media & Communications staff. See more online at legion.org/coronavirus.



Ugo Giannini sketched this illustration of his desperate struggle to reach Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. Courtesy Maxine Giannini

PART ONE

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A D-DAY SOLDIER

Ugo Giannini sketched images across Europe that would haunt him forever.

BY JEFF STOFFER

Maxine Giannini says she never began to fully know her husband until six months after his Jan. 31, 1993, death at 73 from pulmonary fibrosis. "It's a terrible thing," she says of the illness. "You die one breath at a time." In those final breaths, the New Jersey artist asked his wife of 37 years to wait at least six months before entering his studio. "It'll be too much for you," he told her. The next day, Ugo Giannini was gone.

A half-year later, Maxine went in and saw on the easel his final work in progress, titled "H-Hour." In a separate folder, she discovered 27 drawings that "seared into my brain ... 'I can't believe what I am

looking at.'" Their son knew of the drawings, which chronicled the bloody, grueling campaign from Omaha Beach to the European theater's closing curtain, but she had no idea they existed. Among his effects was a bundle of letters tied together with a blue ribbon. They were written during his time in service, many of which were returned to him when he came home. Dozens of paintings revealing the war's long-term effects filled the room.

Certain details of his life, like the Normandy invasion and the horrors that followed, were not openly discussed. Maxine's brother fought at Iwo Jima, but their conversations even when the family

got together did not include World War II. They spoke of other things, the war silently simmering inside them, except when Ugo would erupt to shout warnings to soldiers crossing the beaches of his nightmares. He would not sit in an exposed position in a concert hall. City traffic drove him mad.

His behavior was something she came to accept, not fully understanding what stirred it.
“I met him after he died, on a different plane.”

The water filled my ears and nose.
It was cold, dark and silent below.
I clutched my rifle. Should I let it go –
to free my hands? The sea was all around.
Fifty, 60 yards ahead was the land.
A worm's eye view – my body instinctively
moved towards it.

Ugo Giannini's life can be divided into three chapters: before the war, during it and afterward.

He grew up in East Orange, N.J., the strapping son of Italian immigrants. “Very secular and interior family,” Maxine explains. “They lived through their mama's cooking. She was an extraordinary cook. She was also an opera singer. His father was a tailor. They spoke Italian.” Not until kindergarten did young Ugo speak English.

The family struggled through the Depression. “They moved 15 times,” Maxine says. “(Ugo) came home one day, and ... all the furniture had been repossessed. There was just a coffeepot left, that she cooked on. The cooking and the mother held them together.”

His artistic talent was apparent from an early age, and high school teachers encouraged him to pursue it. He studied at the National Academy of Design in New York, illustrated catalogs for a furniture company and landed an advertising position for Sears in Philadelphia.

The draft changed all that in 1942 when, at 23, Giannini's training switched to the fine art of firing a Browning Automatic Rifle as a soldier in the 175th Infantry Regiment. “The life of a BAR man is about 10 minutes,” Maxine says. “While they were in England waiting to land (at Normandy), they had the men isolated in camps. To keep them amused, they had boxing matches. He was in a boxing match with the champion of the 175th. He was a lefty, gave him an uppercut with the left hand that threw (his opponent) across the tarp and broke his ankle in one blow. The guy was out like a light. Ugo thought, 'I am in big trouble.' They called him into headquarters in



Twenty-one days into combat, soldiers were referred to as “old men.” As the march toward victory in Europe progressed, new fighters in the 29th Division were replaced by the thousands.

Courtesy Maxine Giannini

the morning. They said, ‘You've got a choice: either you're going to box for the 175th and represent us, or you can be an MP.’ He figured, as an MP, he could always go to the kitchen. He was always hungry. That put him on Omaha Beach, that one blow.”

Suddenly a 29th Division MP, Giannini violated regulations by stuffing a sketchbook, pens and pencils into his pack before the June 6, 1944, landings. Of the 37 from his platoon who jumped into the surf at Omaha Beach that morning, six survived. He barely made it through the water himself, weighed down by his gear, bullets whizzing past him, a scene he would immediately put on paper.

“That morning, he climbed into a crater in the Vierville Draw,” Maxine explains. “On the left side, there was a crater made by naval bombardment, and he made the only drawings (of the D-Day invasion as it happened) in the world. He climbed into the crater and saw the whole invasion coming toward him. I have the drawings here.”

Along the edges of the paper are stains from the bloody seawater. She calls it the “DNA” of the invasion.



Maxine Giannini fulfilled her husband's wishes by writing and assembling artwork for "Drawing D-Day: An Artist's Journey Through the War" in 2013. A new edition was published six years later for the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Photo by Josh Marshall

What followed – from soldiers trying desperately to cross the beach to a night patrol that took him past the decapitated head of a friend months later – is a chronology of images and words that steadily descend into a condition he had for the rest of his life. “It wasn’t mentioned, post-traumatic stress,” Maxine says. “There was no word for that.”

I walked slowly, dragging my unwilling soul with me and forcing it to inhale the death odor. I was alone, searching for my comrades – 37 men who were hurled ashore yesterday morning. (Or was it years ago?)

Deadly combat was continuous over the first six weeks after D-Day. By the time St. Lô was secured on July 18, thousands from the 29th Division were killed, wounded or missing. Survivors were battle-hardened. “Any man who was in combat over 21 days was called an old man,” Maxine says, peering at one of the post-D-Day soldier portraits. “They changed. You see the ravage of war in their faces.”

Securing movements inland from the beachhead and guarding German prisoners who had vowed to fight to the death were among the MP’s duties. The 29th would fight the Germans out of the coastal area and lead the push into German-occupied St. Lô, a critical objective to gain control over northwestern

France. When the fighting was done at St. Lô, “nothing was left standing,” Maxine says, viewing a drawing of two MPs helping a wounded soldier, dated July 18, 1944. “Ugo couldn’t understand why the French loved us. We were wrecking their homes.”

Nearly 4,000 soldiers from the 29th were killed in the march to victory in Europe. More than 15,500 were wounded. Replacements came and went. “They were called un-blooded troops,” Maxine says. “An un-blooded troop is a troop who has not been in combat and is young. And those were the only troops they could send into that situation. These were kids. And kids are invulnerable ... nothing is going to happen to them.”

The so-called old men, like Ugo Giannini, would soon assure them that something indeed, something life-changing, was going to happen to them.

These things will be with me in a part of my memory I wish to destroy.

“Drawing D-Day: An Artist’s Journey Through the War” was first published in 2013, and a second edition came out from Dover Publications in 2019, in recognition of D-Day’s 75th anniversary. The book, as its title suggests, is a chronological compilation of letters, poems, drawings and paintings by Ugo Giannini, with interspersed prose by his wife, researched and written after his death.

Central to the book are letter exchanges with family members and a sweetheart at home, referred to by the pseudonym “Rene.” As the war progresses, he writes frequently to her from the front, often to express frustration that her replies are too infrequent. “Everyone is receiving mail quite regularly again – but me!” he wrote a month after storming Omaha Beach. “The last I heard from you was May, and here it is July 7.”

Letters to Rene, his parents and his brother differ. To his parents, they were not to worry. His brother Walter received something in between – general explanations of the war’s progress with no details and questions about their brother Harold, who was fighting elsewhere in Europe. To Rene, his words are a roller coaster of despair and loneliness occasionally interrupted by elation over a long-awaited letter.

The 29th Division fought its way through Tessy-sur-Vire, where hedgerow-hemmed farm fields concealed deadly German machine gunners. By mid-August, the division had spent 63 days in continuous combat and had been at the point of the spear to secure Normandy. During this time, a flurry of letters from Rene caught Giannini off guard.



On D-Day+2, the MP from New Jersey sketched this image of himself looking westward from Omaha Beach toward Pointe du Hoc. Giannini wrote that bodies were piled up as far as he could see.

Courtesy Maxine Giannini

Here they are, three of the most unlovely letters ever written, arriving in order Aug. 7, 8 and 10 ... I resent fiercely your implications that I'm having "a good time with the madamoiselles." At the front there is only death and horror – no madamoiselles.

Next up was Brest, some 200 miles south in Brittany. As many as 40,000 elite German paratroopers defended the fortified seaport that was deemed essential to supply the Allies. The fighting there was later described in a 29th Division history this way: "Landing on D-Day was a picnic compared to Brest. Brest received the personal order from Hitler to hold for three months."

There, Ugo Giannini began to realize something was happening to him. "I had suffered one week of battle neurosis while we gave Brest a work over – the Jerries turned their 300mm naval guns at us, two landed in my back yard, a huge chunk of shrapnel

tore a window in my tent ... To make matters worse, our own P47s bombed and strafed our area."

By the time the fighting was over in Brest, so little was left that it could not be used as a supply port. In the thick of that fighting, Giannini received better letters from Rene, and his replies expressed both a longing to come home and concern over his mental condition.

I can only repeat what I have said over and over – wait for me – because soon, soon, this must end ... I try as much as humanly possible, every day to outlive the grievous fears. Only lately, I have become inclined to nerves. But they are based on long strain, and I'm sure I'll be feeling fine directly.

"By the time he hits December and January, he's finished," Maxine says, flipping past the hollowed-out faces and devastated buildings her husband had sketched. "Twenty-one thousand men were replaced. He said he was a stranger in his own unit."

One collage of sketched faces is captioned "Thousand Yard Stare." "That's a human being having a hell of a hard time," she says. "They didn't wash themselves for two months. They slept on the ground. They started out as these kids who were going to conquer the world. They are hungry. They are dirty, and they are horrified."

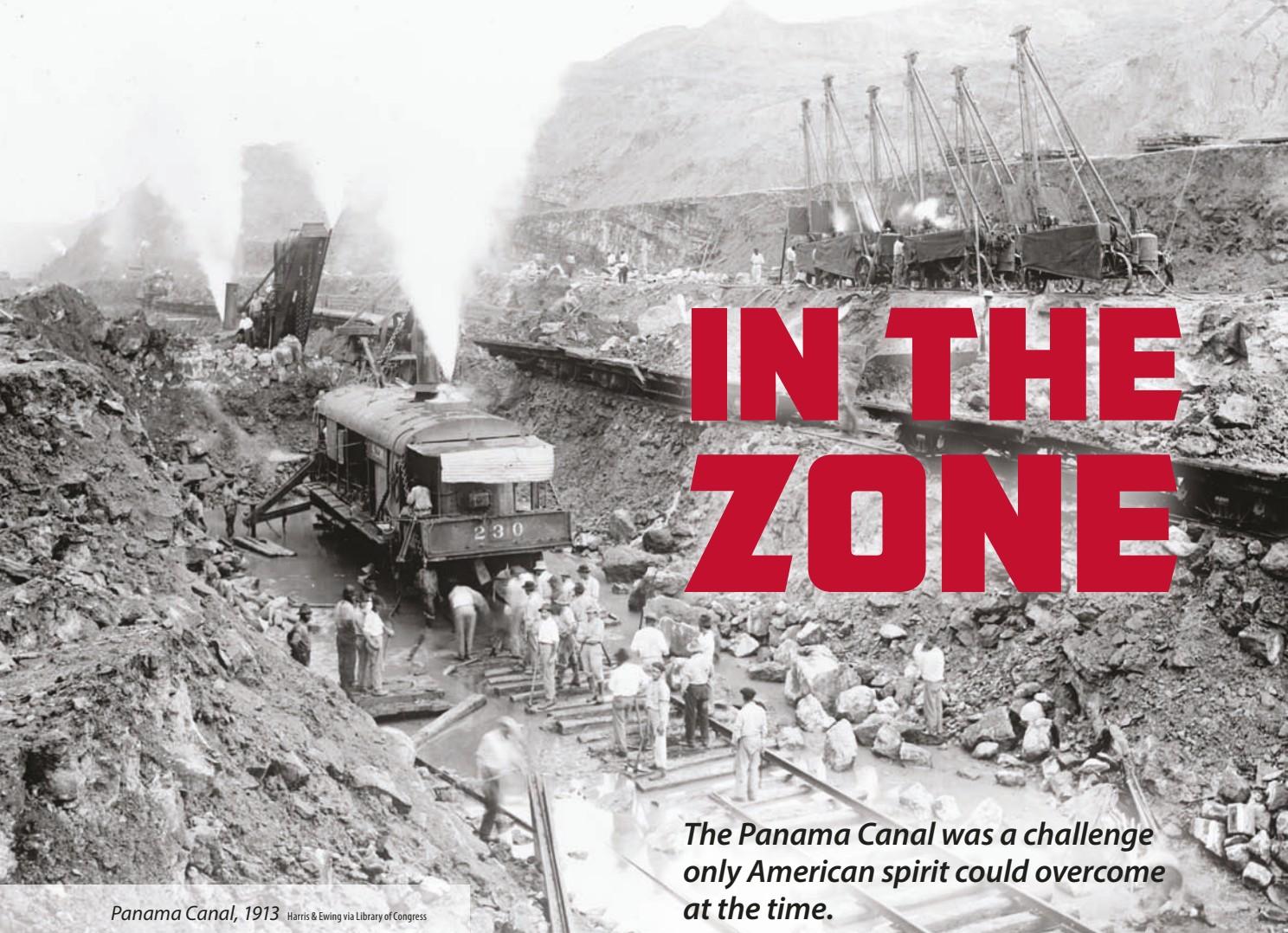
He could draw quickly, in one instance while belly crawling 20 feet behind another soldier. He drew German prisoners and images of himself performing checkpoint duties and buzzing through a war-torn village on an Army-issued Harley-Davidson.

The division moved into Holland and prepared to cross the Siegfried Line – with its "dragon's teeth" obstacles Germany had installed to slow down the Allied forces. Casualties in the 29th had exceeded 14,500 by mid-October. Hitler had instructed all civilians to take up arms against the coming Americans. ☹

Everything is suspended in air, and we pluck indiscriminately at the thoughts – many times leaving out their counterparts. I'm tired and not sure if I have the right even to think.

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

**SEE PART 2 IN THE JULY ISSUE OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE**



IN THE ZONE

Panama Canal, 1913 Harris & Ewing via Library of Congress

BY KEITH NIGHTINGALE

"Left to themselves, Americans build, cultivate, bridge, dam, canalise, invent, teach, manufacture, think, write, lock themselves in struggle with the eternal challenges that man has chosen to confront, and with an intensity not known elsewhere on the globe. Bidden to make war their work, Americans shoulder the burden with intimidating purpose. There is, I have said, an American mystery, the nature of which I only begin to perceive. If I were obliged to define it, I would say it is the ethos – masculine, pervasive, unrelenting – of work as an end in itself. War is a form of work, and America makes war, however reluctantly, however unwillingly, in a particularly workmanlike way. I do not love war; but I love America."

**John Keegan, "Fields of Battle:
The Wars for North America"**

"Most Americans seem to believe that the future can be better and that they are responsible for doing their best to make it that way."

Alexis de Tocqueville

The Panama Canal was a challenge only American spirit could overcome at the time.

Perhaps the two greatest symbols of what America means are the Statue of Liberty and the Panama Canal. The statue represents our values. The canal represents what we are all about. Together, they are us.

Constructed by the United States between 1904 and 1913, the Panama Canal epitomizes the ethos and character of the American spirit. It is worth noting that neither John Keegan nor Alexis de Tocqueville was a U.S. citizen, but each captured the essence of what the canal represented in terms of the American ethos.

For centuries, world shipping empires had dreamed of a cross-isthmus sailing capability to stitch the Atlantic and Pacific trade routes without the time-consuming and dangerous transit of the Straits of Magellan and the "Roaring '40s." Cross-country transits were developed, but they were paltry in terms of commerce and essentially involved people only, not goods. Nations hoped and wished for such a shortcut. America made it happen.

A true cross-isthmus canal was conceived during the French association with Colombia in 1881. The Credit Mobilier de Suez financed an initial survey and dig, led by Ferdinand de Lesseps, a national French hero and chief of construction for the Suez Canal. He deployed a sizeable force of skilled French engineers and imported a large number of laborers from the Caribbean. From the start, he was challenged by major geologic, medical and environmental facts that impeded construction. He was also constantly beset by financial issues, necessitating constant sales requests.

The bulk of the land was swampy and difficult to dredge and drain; that which was not had erratic and variable strata of solid granite that defied the small engineering equipment available. Laborers, both French and Caribbean, died in huge numbers from yellow fever and malaria. The bills mounted. Progress was nil. Finally, in 1902, de Lesseps admitted failure and abandoned the project. He returned to France in disgrace as his bond sales proved to be something like a Ponzi scheme, defrauding thousands of investors.

The new holders of the canal right, Philippe Bunau-Varilla and U.S. partner James Cromwell, attempted to gain American engineering support but were thwarted by the Colombian government, which owned the land and demanded more money than was offered. This issue was quickly resolved in 1903 when the local Panamanians, with significant under-the-table support from new President Theodore Roosevelt, overthrew the Colombian government and were immediately recognized by the United States.

The Panamanians then installed Bunau-Varilla as their representative to the United States. He and Roosevelt constructed a treaty granting the United States rights of transit "in perpetuity" in return for digging the canal. This was memorialized by the creation of the Panama Canal Zone, a stretch of land five miles on each side of the artery. It was known as "the Zone." This was, in essence, sovereign U.S. territory, a point underwritten by Operation Just Cause in 1990 to secure the canal from Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega.

Even though President Jimmy Carter signed the Carter-Torrijos treaty in 1977, ceding the canal in 1999, U.S. control of the Zone remained in place until the end. From 1921 until 1999, one of the most robust areas of The American Legion was "in the Zone" and represented thousands of veterans and active-duty U.S. military personnel who populated the land.

Now that Roosevelt had "won" the canal rights, the work had to begin to excavate it – and fast. He made it abundantly clear that he expected "the dirt to fly" and instilled a sense of urgency on all the leadership. First to feel the heat was the initial senior engineer, John Findley Wallace, formerly chief engineer and finally general manager of the Illinois Central Railroad.

Wallace inherited the remains of the French infrastructure as well as all the problems. Roosevelt installed an oversight committee that became intrusive in the project, which still faced all the physical and geographic issues. Wallace completed the basic surveying and set up labor camps along the trace. He kept the issue of sea-level vice lock canal undecided as he, literally, had only begun to scratch the surface of the immense challenge.

In 1905, Wallace quit in frustration and was quickly replaced by the strong-willed John Frank Stevens, a self-educated engineer who had built the Great Northern Railroad for James G. Hill. Briefed by Wallace on the bureaucracy of the undertaking, Stevens simply bypassed the control commission and communicated his reports and requirements directly to the White House. Roosevelt liked the approach, which conveyed an appearance of progress and ensured he was well-resourced.

After an initial survey of the land, Stevens ordered a halt to all work. Based on his experiences in building over huge tracts of rugged land in bad conditions, he recognized that a quality infrastructure was crucial to ultimate success. He also saw that the issue of digging was quite simple: it was a transportation problem, and he knew a lot about railroads and moving things from place to place.

Stevens immediately went about building and rebuilding the housing, cafeterias, hotels, water systems, repair shops, warehouses and other infrastructure needed by the thousands of incoming workers. He also saw the need for skilled, educated engineering and systems managers at all levels and began recruitment efforts to entice people from the United States and other areas to come to the Canal Zone to work. The canal became an object of American will and symbol of national optimism.

A rail plan was crucial to Stevens' concept and occupied most of his first two years managing the project. Construction was to occur around the clock with continuous two-way traffic. Simply moving dirt from Point A to Point B – where it

could be dumped without impeding progress – was a primary challenge. One of his earliest decisions was to finalize a dam across the Chagres River to create a lake that would be an earth vice concrete structure. Two problems were thus solved in one stroke.

Equally crucial were the two ends of the canal and roadsteads at each entrance – long fingers of dirt and rock stretching from the water's edge to deep anchorage points. Both were ideal recipients of the rock and dirt generated by the excavations. Next required was a rail and conveyance system to manage the huge quantities of material. Again, U.S. ingenuity came to the forefront.

Workers designed a derrick and frame system on the back of a flatcar. This could pick up complete sections of track and lay them down on new ground, allowing an entire portable railroad, much like toy train sets, to be created. Stevens imported hundreds of yard engines from the United States as work horses. Work became a 24/7 reality. Trains ran continuously. "Engines don't get tired," Stevens observed. "The engineers do." He mandated 12-hour shifts with Sundays off, on a staggered schedule so work would be constant.

Flatcars with hinged sides were fabricated to hold the spoil. A simple steel blade called a Lidgerwood plow was created that scraped the spoil off the drop-sided car and into the emerging roadstead or dam.

The Marion Power Shovel Co., with its massive Bucyrus-brand excavator, was named the prime contractor for equipment. The company shipped hundreds of the newly designed excavators which were fitted onto the backs of modified short flatcars. They would become the prime work horses of the dig. Portable rails allowed them to literally chew their way through the land on a continuous basis with tracks alongside to take spoilage away. The dirt began to fly.

Congress had been assuming a sea-level canal would be the design, but this was an open issue with Stevens. He had seen the Chagres in full flood. He had studied the engineer reports suggesting a depth of cut across the middle



George Washington Goethals supervised the construction of the Panama Canal. Library of Congress

mountain range and doubted that would work. He traveled to Washington in 1905 to argue his case.

To the Canal Commission and Congress, he outlined what would be the ultimate design: three lock areas, two on the Pacific side and one on the Atlantic, connected and fed by a huge lake, Gatun, that was filling up behind the emerging dam. The lake would allow continuous passage, fed by the significant annual rainfall. The design would be cheaper and more likely successful than sea-level. Stevens won the day.

Arriving on site shortly before Stevens traveled to Washington was one of the most important Americans to work the canal: William Gorgas. He had been appointed chief sanitation officer of the canal construction project in 1904. Gorgas implemented a range of measures to minimize the spread of deadly diseases, particularly yellow fever and malaria, which had previously killed hundreds of workers.

Gorgas' so-called "mosquito science" was not popular among his colleagues, but he was adamant and won full support from Stevens. Investment was made in extensive sanitation projects, including city water systems, fumigation of buildings, spraying of insect-breeding areas with oil and larvicide, installation of mosquito netting and window screens, and elimination of stagnant water. After two years of extensive effort, the mosquito-spread diseases were nearly eliminated.

Completely spent by the harsh environment, constant quibbling and meddling by Congress and a fervent desire to return home, Stevens abruptly quit in 1907. This infuriated Roosevelt, who demanded that an Army engineer replace Stevens "because he can't quit." The chosen man was a major, later a general, named George Washington Goethals. Widely but somewhat erroneously credited with building the Panama Canal, Goethals saw the project through completion in 1914 but always gave full credit to his predecessors, especially Stevens.

Goethals was instantly sensitive to the immensity of the management tasks. He created a



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simple, utilitarian chain of command using Army officers in most key projects. Where Stevens rarely delegated much authority, Goethals saw delegation as the key to efficiency and success.

He divided the engineering and excavation work into three divisions: Atlantic, Central and Pacific. The Atlantic Division was responsible for construction of the massive breakwater at the entrance to Limon Bay, the Gatun locks and their 3½-mile approach channel, along with the immense Gatun Dam. The Central Division had the difficult task of cutting through Culebra and establishing the trace into Gatun. The Pacific Division was responsible for the Pacific 3-mile breakwater in Panama Bay, the approach channel to the locks, the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel locks, and their associated dams and reservoirs.

He intuitively understood that each major area was unique and required focused attention. One key issue was the immense design and construction of the locks, as well as the seemingly innocuous question: how will the canal be run?

Goethals asked for bids on canal support systems and power infrastructure. New Jersey's New York Edison made a bid, as did a new firm, General Electric (GE), fronted by Charles Steinmetz, the other wizard of electricity. The GE bid, which was highly innovative, suggested electric tow cars for each lock and electrical gates for all water discharges. Many of the discharge pipes and the Chagres Dam would be penstock power generators requiring no traditional boiler steam turbines and their attendant needs.

In sum, GE suggested the canal be all-electric. GE also agreed to do the bulk of the work at cost and take its profit later. Edison was not nearly as forthcoming, desiring steam turbines in a proposal that was considerably more expensive. Thomas Edison's personal lobbying was unsuccessful, and Congress selected the low bidder. The system that GE installed remains in use today. Big, strong and simple, it was also highly innovative.

Cement was needed in huge quantities. Goethals monopolized most of the East Coast cement shippers and extracted minimal profitability per sack for the value of the quantity purchased. The issue then became how to mix and transport the material. Each area was different, requiring a unique approach. The hill areas necessitated long cable stringers of mix where the flat lands were dependent on rail transport from mix to pour sites. Again, the delegation of authority was critical.

No one had ever developed a formula for the proper cement-sand-water ratios for the lock

systems. They would be exposed to both salt water and fresh water, the intense Panamanian sun, and constant wet-dry-wet exposure. These chambers, each eight stories high, 1,000 feet long and 108 feet wide, staggered the designers. No precedent existed. Goethals' guidance was simple: "Don't worry about precedent. Just do."

The mix ratio, now lost to history, worked superbly well. Routine concrete testing done today by maintenance personnel shows the cement is as strong now as the time it was poured.

The overall design was uniquely simple and based on the fact that water seeks its own level. Water in Gatun, higher than all but the entrance locks on each side, would be gravity-fed to each lock through the floor chambers. The water would raise the ship inside, the next stage lock would open and the ship would progress. The preceding chamber would drain into the canal, and the technique would be repeated. Simple in all respects, other than construction.

By 1910, the system design was complete. Continuous labor remained, albeit with a major problem: Culebra Cut. Goethals supervised the dig from his yellow locomotive, the "Yellow Peril." A successful cut at Culebra presented unique challenges. The hill was a mix of unstable granite slabs and dirt. The deeper the cut, the wider the opening had to be. Army engineer David DeBose Gaillard improvised a miniature railroad system for each of the multiple cutting levels on each side, much like rice paddies on a hill. Despite prodigious drilling and blasting, a sufficient "angle of repose" could not be found.

At one point, Gaillard believed he had finally reached the right angles. That night, an earthquake, one of many routine to the isthmus, collapsed both sides. Gaillard went to Goethals in despair. Goethals simply said, "Dig it out and keep digging."

Finally, on Oct. 10, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson sent a telegraph that dynamited the Chagres River blocking dam, and the canal became reality.

What America willed would and did happen. The challenges were opportunities to demonstrate what we as a nation could do if we set our mind to it. From that moment, the Canal Zone and its population of "Zonies" became living symbols of American spirit, competency and values. ¶

Keith Nightingale is a retired Army colonel, two-tour Vietnam War combat veteran and former assault commander in Grenada. He managed the Department of Defense's Counterdrug Task Force in Latin America, from Panama.

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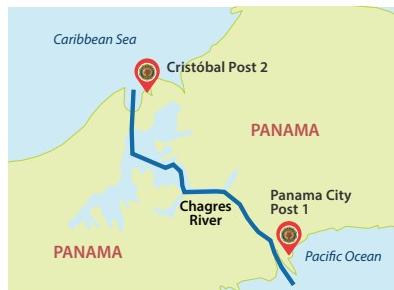
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The American Legion in Panama

World War I veterans who established The American Legion in Panama were primarily employed by the companies that operated the canal or the railroads that served it. A meeting was called at the Century Club in Panama City on Sept. 25, 1919, by a group that had "noticed, in the papers, the activities of the organization in the homeland," according to a 1920-1941 historical narrative of the Department of Panama by T.M. Drake, department historian in 1934. Panama City Post 1 sent in a charter application to American Legion National Headquarters, to be told in reply how to set up a department.

The first department general meeting was at the Balboa Clubhouse on Feb. 29, 1920. Representatives from Post 1 and Cristóbal Post 2 – organized earlier that month – were present. With Cristóbal on the northern Atlantic coast of the country and Panama City on the southern Pacific coast, about 50 miles separated the two posts. The department's jurisdiction was the Republic of Panama and the Canal Zone. The first department convention was held in July; Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans were among the guests, and arrangements were made for a department presence at the national convention in Cleveland that November.

From the beginning, the Department of Panama helped uphold the positions and priorities of The American Legion. In October 1920, the department placed a bronze tablet to memorialize the war on the control house of the Pedro Miguel locks. There was youth support – Post 1 was active with the Boy Scouts throughout the 1920s, and by 1931 the Junior Baseball program had eight teams in two leagues, one on each side of the canal. Aid to veterans was a priority, although the department noted in 1933 that it



"has one advantage in relief measures in that no one will freeze to death because of exposure." And there were "good-neighbor relations" – such as in 1938, when the department began participating in Simón Bolívar Day (July 24) festivities.

It wasn't always easy. Company and military reassessments could cause posts to go in and out of existence. An attempt at instituting a Sons of The American Legion program was dissolved in 1940 due to lack of interest. Despite that, the Department of Panama was ready to serve in the

run-up to World War II; a 1940 resolution offered its services to civil and military authorities wherever needed.

Posts were later formed in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Aruba. Three members served as presidents of the Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion (FODPAL) organization. But the handover of the canal changed things dramatically. According to Patrick O'Connell, a Vietnam War veteran and 36-year Legionnaire who served as department vice commander and alternate National Executive Committee member in 1993-1994, "When President Carter gave the Panama Canal to Panama and our military bases closed, the Legion members started leaving the canal. The post homes were neglected, looted and vandalized." The department headquarters moved to Costa Rica.

At the 1994 national convention in Minneapolis, the American Legion Department of Panama – along with

those of Italy and Canada – was formally retired after a May resolution had approved its dissolution. Then-National Commander Bruce Thiesen, citing changes in membership, mentioned the need "to improve the delivery of services to members in those departments and enhance their opportunities for comradeship and mutual helpfulness."

He added of the bells that had started the ceremony, "As the last bell tolls, it serves as a final salute, ruffle and flourish, to forever seal the honorable achievements of Panama, Canada and Italy into the historic fabric of The American Legion." The department's posts were absorbed into the Department of Mexico. O'Connell estimates that 20 or fewer "Panama Canal Legionnaires" are left. Two posts remain in Panama, including the original Post 1.

—Laura Edwards



USS Missouri passes through the Panama Canal's Miraflores Locks in October 1945, while en route from the Pacific Ocean to New York City. The beam of battleships of this era was determined by the canal's lock dimensions. National Archives

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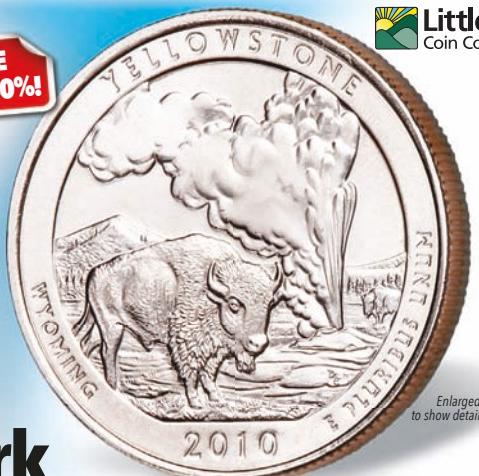
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LORE OF THE LEGION

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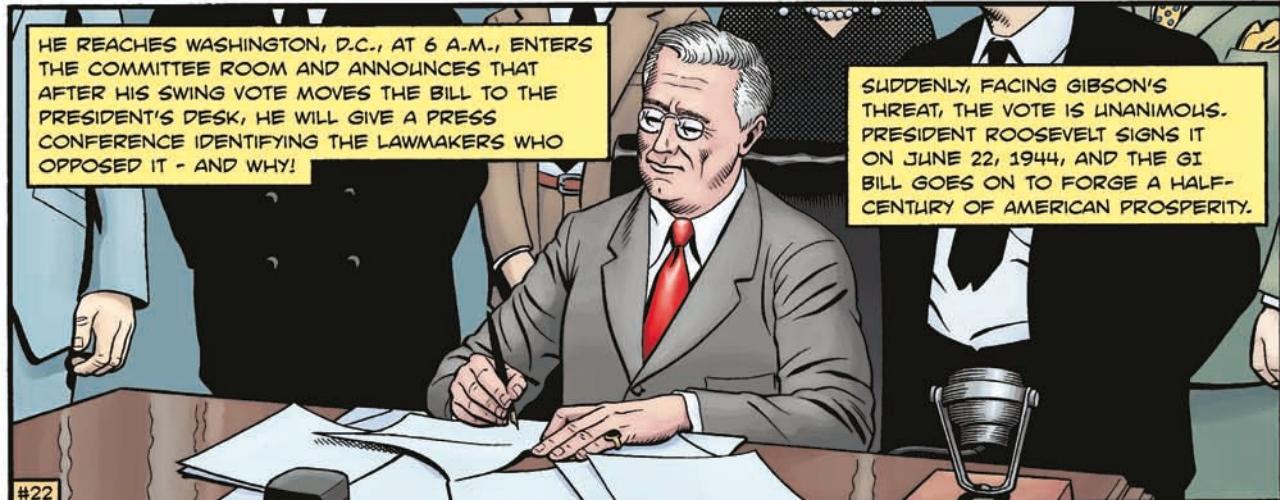
THE HOUSE AND SENATE HAD FINALLY BOTH APPROVED IT, BUT THE SERVICE-MEN'S READJUSTMENT ACT OF 1944 IS IN PERIL. THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, WHOSE JOB IS TO MARRY UP THE HOUSE AND SENATE VERSIONS, IS DEADLOCKED 3-3 OVER THE "52-20" PROVISION OF THE GI BILL OF RIGHTS. HALF OF THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT WANT \$20 A WEEK FOR 52 WEEKS PAID TO BLACK VETERANS READJUSTING TO CIVILIAN LIFE AFTER WORLD WAR II.

THE AMERICAN LEGION IS INFURIATED. REP. JOHN GIBSON, THE SWING VOTE ON THE COMMITTEE, IS SOMEWHERE IN RURAL GEORGIA, AND THE FINAL COMMITTEE MEETING IS SET FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 10, IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL. IF THE LAWMAKERS CAN'T BREAK THE TIE, THE GI BILL WILL DIE.

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STILL SERVING AMERICA

YOUR AMERICAN LEGION AT WORK



Photo by Ronnie Jeffreys

"It's really important to find out if they have any needs, how they're doing. They've always been important, but it feels a bit more important now."

Chaplain Chris Talley of Lester Blackwell American Legion Post 138, Roxboro, N.C., on Buddy Checks he and his fellow Legionnaires conducted to help veterans sheltering at home during the coronavirus pandemic

SERVING VETERANS

\$17,915

Amount in American Legion National Emergency Fund grants distributed in March to veterans and posts that suffered damages due to natural disasters

389

VA disability claim decision appeals granted in favor of the veteran after representation by national American Legion appeals experts in March

6

New American Legion posts chartered in March – one each in Alabama, Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Texas, and two in Colorado

SERVING YOUTH

\$13,375

Amount in American Legion national youth scholarships disbursed in March

48

American Legion department Oratorical Contest champions crowned for 2020, who would have competed in the national championship in April, had it not been suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic

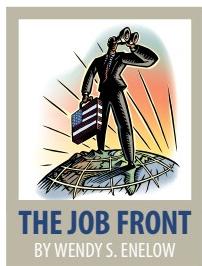
18

Children assisted through \$7,019 in American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants in March. The grants help financially struggling military and veteran families with minor children who need assistance with housing, utilities, food and clothing.



CAREERS

Ace your video interview

**THE JOB FRONT**

BY WENDY S. ENELOW

Thomas Edison conducted the first job interview in 1921 when he created a written test to evaluate job candidates. The process has come a long way since then, with *Business Insider* reporting that 60 percent of employers use video interviewing for remote hiring. During the current global health crisis, video interviews are becoming the norm.

Here are some tips to make sure your video interviews are top-notch:

- **Be sure your internet connection is strong.** Video interviews are conducted using virtual meeting applications. Some of the most common are Skype, Google Meet, WebEx, GoToMeeting and ezTalks Cloud Meeting. Download the software and test it several times to be certain your video and audio are at top speed.
- **Set up a clean space for interviewing.** Find a good location with a neutral wall color and good lighting. Remove clutter, clean off shelving, and remove anything you don't want a prospective employer to see. Remember that the interviewer will get a glimpse into your personal life, so be certain your space reflects the right image. A photo, flowers, or something else that looks neat and professional is fine, but keep it simple. And be sure your space is quiet, with no interruptions.
- **Dress appropriately.** Video interviewing is just like any other interview, so you want to be certain that you're dressed professionally. When you're testing your internet connection, also test how your clothing appears. Keep it conservative, nothing too flashy or bright. Men can never go wrong with a button-down shirt and tie (if appropriate). Women can never go wrong with a blouse and skirt or slacks.
- **Don't "step" on your interviewer.** There can sometimes be a momentary lag between when your interviewer speaks and when it's your turn to respond. It's easy to become over-anxious and respond immediately, but give it a few seconds so that you're certain the conversation flows well.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Whether interviewing in-person or virtually, you always want to practice so you're confident in your answers. Some questions will be obvious (e.g., "tell me about yourself"). Others will be specific to the job, so closely review the job posting to determine what questions will be asked.
- **Be prepared.** As with all interviews, have paper and pen at your disposal to jot down important information. And, of course, be certain that you give your interviewer all of your contact details – phone and email – at the beginning and at the end of the interview, so they can easily contact you to follow up for the next round of interviewing.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Chad Swygard

ACTIVE DUTY

Captain America at sea

USS *America*, a new amphibious assault ship, is using Captain America's red, white and blue shield as its battle flag, *Business Insider* reports. The ship was spotted flying the Captain America battle flag – also known as a house flag – as it deployed to the Indo-Pacific.

"The iconic Captain America symbol – the First Avenger for this first-in-class fifth-generation amphibious assault ship – was the perfect fit," Capt. Luke Frost told *Business Insider*. Frost added that the Captain America symbol is "bold, graphic, with a clear patriotic and easily identifiable association with the name 'America.'"

"From Oliver Hazard Perry's 'Don't Give Up the Ship' flag at the Battle of Lake Erie to George Dewey's 'FIGHT!' flag in the Battle of Manila and into the modern era, battle flags ... have been used to motivate, rally and inspire ship's sailors and Marines," Frost said. "These flags express unit pride and the fighting spirit of the crew."

WAR ON TERRORISM

New tool of terrorism

Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip have adopted an ugly new tool of terror: improvised explosive devices (IEDs) attached to children's balloons. As *The Washington Post* reports, the IED-laden balloons are sometimes emblazoned with cheerful messages like "I Love You" or "Happy Birthday."

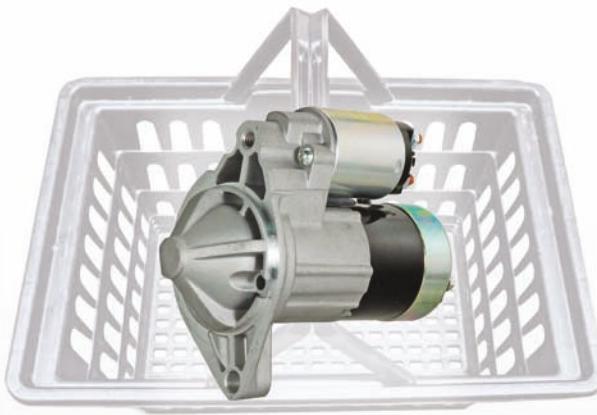
"They are terror balloons. There is no other name," said Chai Fahima, head of an Israeli police bomb-disposal squad. "Their purpose is to terrify. But if it explodes near a person, near a child, it can kill."

Fahima noted that a third of the balloons reported each day carry explosives. According to the *Post*, most of the terror balloons land harmlessly in the countryside, but the newspaper adds this new form of terrorism is taxing local police departments, disrupting daily life and taking "a psychological toll on those who live within reach of the Gaza breeze."

"Our children have learned to be scared of balloons," said a mother and businesswoman who lives near the Israel-Gaza border area.

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Personal finance trends

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

I'm always on the lookout for personal finance trends. Earlier this year, I stumbled on a fantastic 2019 year-end recap from the Military Families Learning Network. Read on for five of the trends and studies they highlighted – plus your personal finance action items.

▪ **We like the herd.** It makes sense; we're social creatures. That can be good or bad. If we hear that we're spending a lot more on restaurants than our peers, it could encourage us to use the dining room table for its intended purpose. On the other hand, our peers can validate our bad habits. I come across – and share – plenty of studies showing that Americans are doing a poor job saving for retirement. While my intent has always been to highlight an area for improvement, maybe I've been sending the wrong message. Folks could be thinking, "Hey, I'm not alone. Maybe it's OK."

Your action item: Blaze your own trail by establishing goals and creating a personalized plan to achieve them. Regardless of what others are doing or failing to do, you'll have a clear path to success.

▪ **We like to take one step at a time.** If I look down and to the left, there's a checklist sitting next to my keyboard. There's nothing like leaving the office at the end of the day having worked my way from top to bottom. While I'm not much of a multitasker, when it comes to financial goals multitasking may be a necessity. For example, having every cent of debt paid off shouldn't be a prerequisite to saving for retirement.

Your action item: Review your financial goals and, if you're not already doing it, look for opportunities to go after them simultaneously.

▪ **Second jobs are common.** Bankrate's Side Hustle survey indicates that about a third of Americans are making money outside their main employment. Unfortunately, the same survey indicates that the extra income is a necessity to cover regular living expenses.

Your action item: Work both ends of the budget to create space for financial good. In other words, look for opportunities to cut expenses and boost income to pay down debt, save and invest.

▪ **New car loans are nearing 70 months.** That's the average length of a new car loan, according to Experian. My advice is to shoot for a loan you can pay off in fewer than five years. If you can't make that work, look for a different car or hold off on the purchase.

Your action item: Make the right call on your next car purchase.

▪ **Our finances are fragile.** The government shutdown that ended last year shed some light on the value of emergency savings. A Prudential study, appropriately titled Financial Fragility, of several hundred federal workers and government contractors found that 49 percent fell behind in paying bills and 42 percent increased debt when they encountered an income disruption.

Your action item: Build an emergency fund today. While the equivalent savings of three to six months of core expenses is ideal, even \$1,000 can help bridge a small gap.

Want to learn more? Watch the full video at militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

SPACE

Mini-moon

Earth has a new moon, at least for a little while. As EarthSky reports, "Astronomers have released the new image ... of 2020 CD3, the new 'temporary captured object.'"

While the object was apparently captured into Earth orbit about three years ago, only recently did astronomers at the Catalina Sky Survey, based in Tucson, Ariz., discover the mini-moon. Earth's temporary new moon is about six to 12 feet in diameter.

"If it is natural in origin – a captured asteroid – then it is only the second known rocky satellite of the Earth ever discovered in space other than Earth's large natural moon," according to EarthSky. "The other body, discovered in 2006, has since been ejected out of Earth orbit."

The International Gemini Observatory/National Optical-Infrared Astronomy Research Laboratory/AURA/G. Fedorets

BUSINESS

Fast-food fragrances

McDonald's is releasing a six-pack of candles scented to match all the ingredients in the fast-food giant's iconic Quarter Pounder: a bun, ketchup, pickles, cheese, onion and beef. The McDonald's candles come in all the scents you'd expect. As CNN reports, "The candles were created to celebrate the burger's nearly 50-year run."



Wikimedia Commons

NEWS

2020 national convention, other summer events cancelled

Even during the darkest days of World War II, American Legion national conventions were held each year by our World War I founders to conduct the organization's business and keep it helping communities, states and the nation through trying times.

Then, though, the fighting was oceans away. Today's trying times are everywhere. So for the first time in The American Legion's 101-year history, there will not be a national convention this year.

In April, the COVID-19 health emergency led to the cancellation of the 102nd National Convention, scheduled for Louisville, Ky., at the end of August. All told, around 8,000 American Legion Family members from around the world typically attend the convention.

"The safety of our members and compliance with state and federal public-health restrictions and guidelines made this decision not only prudent but necessary," American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford said.

The 102nd National Convention is now scheduled for Aug. 27-Sept. 2, 2021, in Phoenix. The terms of currently serving national officers, including Oxford, are extended until then, according to the the national constitution and Resolution No. 3, unanimously passed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) in an email vote. Nationally appointed American Legion commission and committee chairpersons will also remain in their positions until the NEC's 2021 Fall Meetings per this resolution. These actions are within the authority of the NEC according to The American Legion's constitution and bylaws.

The national convention is the culmination of a summer of traditional American Legion national events, which this year have been cancelled as well:

- American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Championship
- American Legion Baseball regionals and World Series
- American Legion Legacy Run
- Sons of The American Legion national convention
- American Legion Boys Nation.

Go to legion.org/coronavirus for the latest news and updates.

EDUCATION

Chapter 33 benefits and COVID-19



Q: This is my first semester in college using my Chapter 33 GI Bill Benefits. I did not register for online classes since my monthly housing allowance (MHA) would only be \$894.50 compared to resident classes being paid at \$1,671. Because of COVID-19, my classes were taught online effective March 23. What will happen with my MHA?

A: With the passing of Senate Bill 3503, Chapter 33 students who were pursuing resident courses and converted to online teaching due only to COVID-19 will continue to receive the same MHA rate for resident. So you should be receiving the same monthly rate. If there are additional fees due to online teaching, contact your school so it can certify the correct tuition and fees to VA.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Lucas McWhorter

VERBATIM

To us, the American presence is like the electricity network in a house ... If the light is turned off the whole place goes dark.

Iraqi brigadier general based in western Iraq, speaking on condition of anonymity

Source: AP

MEMBERSHIP

NEW POSTS

Post 233, Pecos, Texas Chartered March 31 (15 members)

Post 175, Longmeadow, Mass. Chartered March 31 (15 members)

Post 2020, Littleton, Colo. Chartered March 26 (39 members)

Tamarac Post 1920, Denver Chartered March 26 (37 members)

Glenn D. Frazier Post 222, Spanish Fort, Ala. Chartered March 25 (17 members)

Townsend-Doles Post 2020, Claremore, Okla. Chartered March 23 (19 members)

Post 911, Sioux Falls, S.D. Chartered Feb. 26 (15 members)

How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership. Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

12th TFW (MacDill, FL, Cam Ranh AB & Phu Cat AB, Vietnam) / 12th FEW/SFW (Bergstrom AFB, TX & Korea) / Supporting Units, Dayton, OH, 10/28-31, E.J. Sherwood, (480) 396-4681, ej12tfw@cox.net; **93rd Bomb Grp (WWII)**, Salt Lake City, 10/15-19, John Marx, (412) 327-1909, 109clearview@gmail.com; **6937th Comm Grp (All PAS Alumni, 1958-1969)**, Fairborn, OH, 9/17-10/1, Tom Davis, (937) 270-3395, tjdavis@erinet.com; **D/2/16 1st Inf Div (1967-1970)**, Topeka, KS, 9/10-12, Don Dignan, (734) 525-0157, dondignan@sbcglobal.net; **F-106 All Trips Reunion**, Melbourne, FL, 11/11-15, Bob Kwiecienski, (772) 571-6056, bobske9933@aol.com

ARMY

7th Bn 13th Field Arty 1st Field Force All Btrys (Vietnam, 1966-1970), Biloxi, MS, 9/19-24, Kevin Calkins, (630) 542-1095, mcaulk@att.net; **7th Finance (Vietnam, 1964-1966)**, Gettysburg, PA, 9/21-23, Tony Topper, (717) 359-0713, atopper27@comcast.net; **9th Inf 3rd Bde 5th, 60th Bravo Co 3rd Plt (1969-1970)**, Renville, MN, 9/28-10/1, Dennis Evenson, (605) 520-2111, shkld@itctel.com; **18th & 54th Avn Co "Otterness" (Vietnam)**, Houma, LA, 10/27-30, "Bic" Bickerton, (404) 663-1820, 18.54aviation@gmail.com; **31st Inf Rgt, Rock Island, IL, 9/19-23**, Charlie Tapp, (864) 680-9165, ctapp94@gmail.com; **56th Trans Co (ADS) (Vietnam, 1964-1972)**, San Antonio, 9/17-20, Joe Perchetti, (609) 440-1397, jperchetti@aol.com; **119th AHC & All Attached Units (Vietnam)**, Branson, MO, 9/15-18, Spencer Gardner, (817) 629-3155, spencergardner61@gmail.com; **815th Eng Bn B Co (Vietnam, 1970)**, Mount Horeb, WI, 9/8-9, Dewey Hefty, (608) 228-6703, deweyhefty@mhtc.net; **Alpha Co 3rd Eng Bn 24th Inf Div**, Hinesville, GA, 8/29-30, Roy Owens, (912) 432-1188, slim52@comcast.net; **Arizona Army Security Agency**, Tucson, AZ, 8/13-16, Jerry Darr, (480) 507-6825, ardf308@gmail.com; **B Co 2/327th 101st Abn (1967-1970)**, Branson, MO, 9/16-20, Bill Spielman, (402) 432-0635, bspiel7607@aol.com; **Eighth Army - All Divs & Units That Served in Korea, All Eras**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 8/7-9, Daniel McPharlin, (925) 308-4337, qm@7ida.us

MARINES

3rd Mar Div & 1st Bn 3rd Mar (Vietnam & All Eras), Arlington, VA, 8/11-16, Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumc13usmc@verizon.net; **Echo Co 2nd Br 3rd Mar Rgt 3rd Mar Div (Vietnam, 1965-1969)**, Tampa Bay, FL, 9/20-24, Antonio Gonzales, (512) 376-8919, gonzales.antonio@att.net; **Mar Bks Sasebo, Japan**, Las Vegas, 10/19-21, Bob McCarthy, (515) 274-9110, coach430@aol.com; **Montford Point Marines Assn**, King of Prussia, PA, 8/26-29, Eric Nelson, (703) 629-8839, montfordpointmarines.org

NAVY

Amphib Ships Reunion, Annapolis, MD, 9/21-25, Willard Stewart, (814) 669-9189, buzzjudy@comcast.net; **Arlington AGMR 2**, Albuquerque, NM, 10/14-18, Michael Ferderer, (952) 935-8162, mpferderer@comcast.net; **Bausell DD 845**, St. George, UT, 9/26-30, Eugene D'Arezzo, (928) 854-2205, genied@frontiernet.net; **Belknap DLG/CG 26**, Lynchburg, VA, 10/14-18, Michael Reeves, (434) 944-1376, reevescm@comcast.net; **Bristol DD 857 (Final Reunion)**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/26-30, Paul Ratcliffe, (973) 309-4040, pd_ratcliffe@msn.com; **Brown DD 546 & Bradford DD 545**, Albuquerque, NM, 8/27-30, Fred Korzekwa, (317) 578-7736, korzekwaf@

sbcglobal.net; **Chikaskia AO 54**, Nashville, TN, 9/6-10, Bob Grant, (352) 753-7552, bobgrant1942@gmail.com; **Constant MSO 427, Warbler MSC 206 & All WESTPAC Mine Forces**, Moravia, IA, 10/1-4, Elwood Tharp, (641) 777-5731; **Du Pont DD 941**, Harrisburg, PA, 9/27-10/1, Bill Mervine, (302) 798-9092, wa3tag@gmail.com; **Enterprise CVAN/CVN 65**, Las Vegas, 9/23-27, Bruce Mooberry, (316) 540-3703, brucemooberry@gmail.com; **Frank E. Evans DD 754**, San Antonio, 10/21-24, Donna Kraus, (760) 521-4700, krausdfm@gmail.com; **Hawkins DD 873**, New Orleans, 9/29-10/3, Donald Keller, (410) 465-1977, dckeller30@zerovernet.net; **Mansfield DD 728**, Rapid City, SD, 9/9-12, Mike Backlund, (507) 514-1768, mike728@mccyi.net; **McCloy DE/FF 1038**, Clearwater Beach, FL, 10/16-18, Pete Russo, (732) 312-2337, pgrusso10@yahoo.com; **Mispillion AO 105**, Nashville, TN, 9/6-10, Steve Dengler, (217) 741-6311, stevedsra@gmail.com; **Navy Flt Hosp 15 & Mar Attached to Graves Registration (Open Desert Storm, 1991)**, Bethlehem, PA, 9/17-18, Gerald Lebeduk, (484) 221-1361, jnmml@ptd.net; **New Jersey BB 62**, Cherry Hill, NJ, 9/16-20, Phil Tasker, (727) 321-2237, philip@phtasker.net; **NMCB 3**, Branson, MO, 10/1-4, Victor Horvath, (832) 722-9434, bigbuzzard@outlook.com; **Pickaway APA 222**, Annapolis, MD, 9/21-25, Willard Stewart, (814) 669-9189, buzzjudy@comcast.net; **Pictor AF 54**, Nashville, TN, 9/17-17, Jan Mazurek, (716) 698-6070, mazurejd@yahoo.com; **Ranger CV/CVA 61 - Crew, Sqdns, Marine Det & TAD**, Norfolk, VA, 9/30-10/3, Tom Ballinger, (210) 403-3302; **Scamp SSN 588**, Rapid City, SD, 5/17-21, Rod Stark, (702) 582-1424, scampreunion2021@virtualmemorypix.net; **Spinax SS 489**, North Little Rock, AR, 5/3-7, Jack Thormahlen, (512) 913-4861, eht_jlt@yahoo.com; **Springfield Bluejackets CL 66/CLG 7/SSN 761**, New Orleans, 9/10-13, Keith Rivard, (865) 388-2478, kmrivard@gmail.com; **Tutuila ARG 4**, Norfolk, VA, 9/16-19, John Ward, (570) 384-3057, kandjw@epix.net; **Valley Forge CV 45/LPH 8**, New Orleans, 9/16-20, Ed Camardelle, (985) 507-8551, stephaniecamardelle@att.net; **VP-40**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/7-11, Guy Fisk, (828) 423-2106, ggfish@vp40.com

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 331, IN: George Brown
Post 170, NJ: John Weeks
Post 355, WI: Gary Gilstrap

IN SEARCH OF

1st Plt 501st MP Co 1st AD (Open Desert Storm, 1991), Robert Howard, (407) 412-1443, rehoward305@yahoo.com
5th Msl Bn 73rd FA (Erlangen, Germany, 1963-1965), Mike Eckersley, (402) 312-0965
6/32 Arty Metro (Ninh Hoa, Vietnam, 1967-1968), Richard Borg, (309) 945-6386
93rd Eng Co Float Bridge (Nellingen, Germany, 1959-1960), Tom Colgan, (631) 586-0520

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93rd Evac Hosp (Fort Leonard Wood, MO, 1971-1973), Jerry Bowen, (301) 465-2651, bookmaker-jb@myactv.net
805th Trans Grp (Vung Tau, Vietnam, 1968-1969), Angel Gonzalez, (773) 537-8441
A Co 40th Armor (Fort Wainwright, AK, 1966-1969), Ed Marini, mkebikecop554@gmail.com
Co 315 (NTC San Diego, June-Aug 1962), Ken Kavon, (608) 443-6693, kpk50@yahoo.com
Co 379 (NTC Great Lakes, IL, Nov 1952-Feb 1953), Dan Mansolino, (330) 963-0202, ussglennddd840@aol.com
Co HHD 171st Infantry Mech (Fort Wainwright, AK, 1966-1969), Ed Marini, mkebikecop554@gmail.com
CSSC 2nd Bn 12th Cav 1st Cav Div (Fort Hood, TX & Germany, 1976-1979), Marvin Huitfeldt, (716) 397-5718, marvinhuitfeldt@gmail.com

Harbor Clearance Unit One (HCU-1) Plankholders, Tom Hogan, thogan2207@ AOL.com
HHD 171st Support Bn 171st Inf Bde (Mech) (Fort Wainwright, AK, 1966-1967), Wayne Dare, (609) 922-4243
Naval Security Grp Emergency Reaction Force, Pacific (Mar Corps Air Stn, Kaneohe, HI & Naval Comm Station, Wahiawa, HI, 1968-1971), Bob Hughes, (281) 414-7810, pelikanguru@sbcglobal.net
Pilot Tng Class 55N (Bartow AB, FL, 1954), F. Dalton Rackley, (252) 903-5071, daltonrackley@aol.com
River Div YR 71 & PBR (Da Nang & Mekong Delta, Bing Thuy, Vietnam, May 1970-Apr 1971), Mike "Piezon" Cassesse, (203) 605-3307
VAH-4 (NAS Whidbey Island, WA, 1964-1965), Ken Kavon, (608) 443-6693, kpk50@yahoo.com

CANCELED REUNIONS

If your military reunion has been canceled, let us know by sending an email to reunions@legion.org. For a list of canceled reunions, go to legion.org/reunions/canceled.



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It is important to follow the laws of grammar. Rules is rules.

A WOMAN saw an electrician walking up her drive and rushed to the door.

"Why did you come today?" she barked. "You were supposed to repair the doorbell yesterday!"

"I know," the electrician replied. "I rang three times. There was no answer, so I thought you must be out."

A JUDGE glared at the defendant and said, "So you admit breaking into the dress shop?"

"Yes, your honor," the defendant replied.

"And why was that?"

"My wife wanted a dress."

The judge consulted his notes. "But it says here that you broke into that shop four nights in a row."

"Yes, sir," the defendant said. "She made me exchange it three times."

A BALD MAN sat down in the chair and said to the barber, "I went for a hair transplant, but I couldn't stand the pain. If you can make my hair look like yours without causing me any discomfort, I'll pay you \$5,000."

Without hesitating, the barber began shaving his own head.

A MAN bought a parrot at an auction, after some spirited bidding. "I suppose the bird talks," he said to the auctioneer.

"Talks?" the auctioneer replied. "He was bidding against you for the last half-hour."



"Don't you just love these heated seats?"



"This is a new stress test. We just put on the news."



"We love watching you. Your planet is our favorite reality show."

A CENSUS TAKER asked a woman her age.

"Well," she replied, "let me think. I was 18 when I married, and he was 30. He is now 60, or twice as old as he was then, so I am now 36."

AT THE POLICE STATION an indignant drunk bellowed, "What I want to know is what I was brought in here for."

"Drinking," the sergeant replied.

"Well, that's different," the drunk said, calming down. "When do we get started?"

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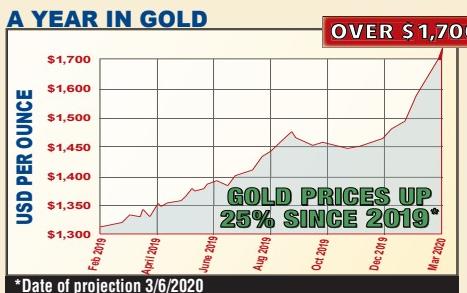
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